

H-OLA Gram

Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs (OLA)

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OLA, Council Collaborate to Bring Spanish Language Access to All District Agencies

The Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs (OLA) will appear before the D C City Council on April 8 to testify in the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Hearing, which is designed to give DC Agencies an opportunity to inform the Council of their plans for increased language access for LEP residents.

Agencies were charged with improving access for LEP constituents following the introduction of the Language Access Act (LAA) by Councilmember Jim Graham last November, and in response to the State of DC Latinos Report released in May 2002. The LAA was not adopted, but the government has responded by initiating the Language Access Pilot Program (LAPP).

The LAPP began in December 2002 and includes the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Employment Services (DOES), and Department of Housing and Community Development. Each of the pilot agencies are providing a detailed analysis of what they are doing and what they can do to improve access to LEP residents.

In addition, OLA is implementing a hybrid of the Spanish Language Law and the Asian and Pacific Island, or API, initiative," Christia Alou, OLA Interim Director, said.

By 2004, all other District agencies will be functioning under a working version of the LAPP.

Through the DC Latino Development Act/API Initiative Hybrid, District Agencies will Provide:

- *Translations*
- *Diversification of Workforce*
- *Multicultural Awareness*
- *Partnerships with Community Based Organizations (CBOs)*
- *Outreach*
- *A Spanish-language coordinator*
- *An Annual Action Plan/Quarterly Status Report*

OLA's Embassy Outreach Initiative Connects with Mexican Embassy, Provides Emergency Preparation

Evacuation routes, emergency kits, who to contact and where to go if disaster should strike were the focus of information presented in Spanish to Embassy of Mexico constituents by FEMS Firefighter Frank Iscoa during the second in the a monthly series of presentations by DC government agencies to Latino embassies, coordinated and sponsored by OLA.



OLA Outreach Specialist, Katherine Ruffner (left), assists an Embassy of Mexico patron with emergency preparedness information.

The *Embassy Outreach Initiative* began in February with a seminar on healthcare and will cover a broad range of topics as the seminar series travels to various Central and South American embassies. The series will be held at the Embassy of El Salvador in April and the Embassy of Honduras in May.

OLA & Agencies Working Toward Successful LEP Solutions

Collaboration between OLA and the DC Government Agency Spanish-language coordinators at an April 1 meeting resulted in a strengthened determination to create solutions to Latino Limited English Proficiency (LEP) issues.

"We're renewing our commitment to working together to improve cultural sensitivity training, to developing a protocol for the translation of city government documents, and collaborating to host a successful DC Government Latino Day in October," Eric Untermahrer, OLA Language Access Advocacy Intern, said.

Of the 17 agencies invited to participate, representatives from eight agencies — DOP, DOES, DPR, DMH, DHS, MPD, DPW, and DHCD — were in attendance.

Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs (OLA)

Frank D. Reeves Center
2000 14th Street NW
2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20006

Phone: 202-671-2825
Fax: 202-673-4557

www.ola.dc.gov



Executive Office of the Mayor,
Office on Latino Affairs

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Sara K. Sanders

Internship Opportunity

The Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs is accepting applications for its 2003 DC Government Summer Internship Program. Selected students will assist with the outreach, advocacy, and collaborative efforts of OLA within the DC Latino community. The internship is will provide students the opportunity to experience local government at the Cabinet level in the most political city in the country—the nation's capital.

There are currently 2 internship positions open to qualified students who will be enrolled in an accredited college or university program in fall 2003. The intern positions will begin June 2, 2003 and are unpaid. Bilingual students are preferred and the length of internship is negotiable.

Notices & Events

- **April 8** - OLA's Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Hearing, Wilson Building, Council Chambers, 2 p.m.
- **April 9** - OLA's Latino CBO Funding Development Roundtable; Reeves Center, 2nd Floor Conference Room, 2000 14th Street NW, 2-4 p.m.
- **April 11** - OLA Budget Hearing, Wilson Building, Council Chambers, 1:30 p.m.
- **Late April** - OLA Latino Merchants Workshop
- **Late April** - OLA Council of Latino Agencies (CLA) Funders' Group Meeting
- **May 10** - Mayor's Crime and Prevention Town Hall, Scripture Cathedral, 810 O St. NW, 8:30 a.m.—1 p.m.

Successful Kick-off Ushers in First Series of OLA's Latino CBO Funding Development Roundtable

A packed conference hall marked the successful initiation of the Latino Community Based Organization (CBO) Funding Development Roundtable on Wednesday, March 12. Representatives from more than a dozen organizations actively serving DC's Latino population were on hand for the first in a series of Roundtable sessions designed by OLA.

The goal of the Roundtable discussions is to provide a forum in which Latino CBOs can develop funding through access to public and private informational resources and, in future sessions, through grants writing workshops. The Roundtable sessions also promote networking and information sharing between Latino CBOs, according to Christia Alou, OLA Interim Director.



The Latino CBO Funding Development Roundtable will held the second Wednesday of each month through September 2003. The next Roundtable will take place **April 9** from 2-4 p.m. at the Frank D. Reeves Center, 2nd Floor Conference Room at 2000 14th Street, NW. The session will feature a presentation by Elizabeth Miller, Director, New Ventures in Philanthropy at the Regional Association of Washington Grantmakers.

Participants are encouraged to write-in organization-specific questions beforehand to be addressed by presenters during the Roundtable discussion. Those questions can be submitted through OLA by contacting Sara Sanders at (202) 671-3013 or via email at sara.sanders@dc.gov.